

# Central States Communication Association

February 2015, Volume 83, Issue 1, Book Review Supplement

## Book Review Call for July 2015

The Central States Communication Association is pleased to continue the book-review section to be included as a supplement to the association's newsletter. This supplement will publish short reviews (of approximately 500 words for monographs and up to 1000 words for longer edited volumes) of recently published books of relevance to the membership of CSCA.

Book review calls will be issued tri-annually for a list of books compiled by the Book Review Editor. Members may additionally make suggestions to the editor for books that should be reviewed at any time and the editor will determine their fit for the membership in consultation with the CSCA Executive Director.

For this book-review section (to be printed July 2015), I am currently seeking reviews for the following books:

- *Teaching Communication Activism: Communication Education for Social Justice* (Eds. Frey & Palmer)
  - *Beyond New Media: Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age* (Eds. Herbig, Herrmann, & Tyma)
  - *Contemporary Case Studies in Health Communication: Theoretical and Applied Approaches* (Ed. Brann)
  - *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication: Multiple Perspectives* (2nd ed.; Eds. Braithwaite & Schrodt)
  - *Gender in a Transitional Era: Changes and Challenges* (Eds. Martinez & Miller)
  - *Volunteering and Communication Volume I: Studies from Multiple Contexts*\*\*
  - *Volunteering and Communication Volume II: Studies in Intercultural and International Contexts* (Eds. Kramer, Lewis, & Gossett)\*\*
- (\*\*One person could review both volumes, or two authors could divide the volumes, but collaborate on their reviews to tell us how the volumes speak to/work with one another)
- *Revolution Mass Media* [textbook] (J. Charles Sterin)

Suggestions for additional books to review can also be made to the book-review editor.

To be considered for a review, please contact the book-review editor at [sarahsteimel@weber.edu](mailto:sarahsteimel@weber.edu) with:

1. Which book you want to review
2. A short explanation as to why that book fits within your area of knowledge/expertise.

If selected to provide a book review, CSCA will provide the book to the reviewing author.

Submissions should not be under review by other publications. Reviews must be written according to the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The editor reserves final discretion about the publication of all reviews.

Please contact the Book Review Editor:

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# Book Review: Eaves (2014)

## *Applications in Health Communication: Emerging Trends*



*Applications in Health Communication: Emerging Trends* edited by [Michael Eaves](#), is a compilation of essays for health communication scholars from both national and international perspectives. The text is divided into five units, each examining various aspects of health communication based upon current research trends. Given the wide variety of topics, it is understandable that the book does not provide deep coverage of the topics. Still, the contents provide new perspectives on emerging trends in health communication.

Unit 1, *Health Disease and Prevention*, includes four chapters covering differing viewpoints discussing various ways to communicate about health. It includes a research study looking at media agenda building in Singapore, an essay looking at the misconceptions about mental health, a study of HIV in the media, and an examination of the communication strategies used when talking about skin cancer. To open Unit 2, *Medical Tourism and Culture in Medicine*, a study of medical tourism and the communication of risks and benefits of obtaining medical services abroad is presented, followed by a study that considers Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a newly evolving area for health communication research. Unit 3 covers health in later years. Communication concerns of aging and health care have increased, as baby boomers will compose the greater amount of the future aging population. Unit 4 focuses on research in health. The chapters consider self-disclosure by college students to their parents about health symptoms and illness, an analysis of the communication of health risks and rewards when it comes to the debate over genetically modified organisms (GMOs), an exploration of the use of social media when communicating health related information, an autoethnography of the experience when facing a visual impairment, and a study suggesting that the biopsychosocial model of health has largely replaced the old biomedical approach to medicine. Finally, Unit 5 explores alternative perspectives in health, including a discussion of effective social support for people coping with eating disorders; an essay that advocates a more holistic approach to studying communication and sexuality; a study of culture, health and Mexican-Americans; and more.

[Eaves](#) presents a variety of articles that examine emerging health communication applications. Some of the topics covered are not discussed in other health communication texts, such as Medical Tourism, Traditional Chinese Medicine, several articles about diverse populations, and Elder Abuse.

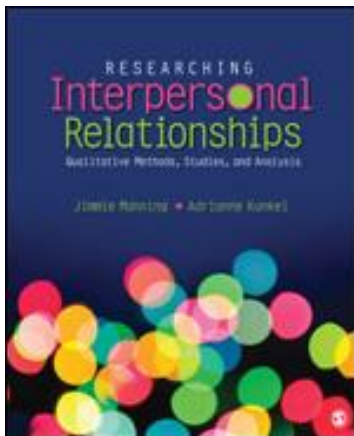
However, while this book does contain interesting information about various facets of health communication, I question the value of this text as a basic textbook in the undergraduate health communication classroom. In order to comprehend the groundwork for many of the chapters, one has to have a basic understanding of primary health communication concepts and theories. I believe that this book would be best used as either a supplement to a basic health communication text or as a starting point for discussions in more advanced health communication courses. I consider some of the content to be too simplistic for graduate level study.

Overall, this book offers some unique perspectives on current issues in health communication, by presenting various essays about topics not generally discussed in other books about health communication. (*Book Review continued on p. 3.*)

Diana Karol Nagy is a Senior Lecturer in the William and Grace Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication at the University of Florida. She specializes in Health Communication and has presented her research at many state, regional and national conferences. She currently has two research articles under review for publication.

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## **Book Review: Manning & Kunkel (2014) *Researching Interpersonal Relationships: Qualitative Methods, Studies, and Analysis***



Interest and application of qualitative research is prevalent in organizational communication (Anderson & Baym, 2004) and developing stronger footing in interpersonal communication research (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2008). *Researching Interpersonal Relationships: Qualitative Methods, Studies, and Analysis* contends that interpretivist-oriented qualitative methodologies are well suited for exploring relationships and offer “possibilities” to enhance and extend interpersonal communication research (Manning & Kunkel, 2014, p. 23). This text provides a thoughtful comprehensive guide for those seeking to understand, while simultaneously providing practical tools for more established qualitative researchers. In particular, the content is suited to graduate students, novice and seasoned qualitative scholars, and curious quantitative scholars who are interested in learning the language and potential of qualitative research.

**Manning** and **Kunkel** (2014), both experienced interpersonal researchers, provide a nuanced understanding of an array of qualitative practices while acknowledging that first and foremost researchers should let the questions drive methodology. They contend that qualitative methodology is a viable way to explore relationships, offering different information compared to quantitative work. Through a conversational voice, the authors engage in an honest discussion of the strengths and weaknesses concerning interpretivist-oriented qualitative research. Further, six of the chapters include discussion transcripts with established interpersonal researchers, illuminating challenges and insights into actual qualitative projects. These honest conversations are not only refreshing, but provide important perspective on the messiness and unexpected challenges (i.e. difficulties collaborating over distances, patience at gaining site access, establishing participant relationships) that qualitative researchers often face.

This accessible book covers considerable ground in a little over 200 pages. The opening two chapters provide a paradigmatic overview of interpretivist-oriented qualitative perspectives, an introduction to qualitative research traditions, a discussion of what qualitative methodology is and is not, and criteria for evaluating qualitative research. Then, chapters three through eight each explain a specific qualitative method, provide an interpersonal communication exemplar, and include conversation transcripts discussing qualitative experiences and choices with the exemplar author(s). Specifically, these chapters explore interviews, focus groups, open-ended surveys, ethnography, discourse analysis, and narrative inquiry. The book concludes by sharing information regarding writing, presenting, and disseminating qualitative work. (*Book Review continued on p. 4.*)

By explaining methodological practices, defining common qualitative terms, and providing concrete interpersonal research examples throughout each chapter, the authors work to create a common language between post-positivist quantitative oriented researchers and more interpretivist-oriented qualitative practices. While the text could easily stand alone as a qualitative methodology book, the content bridges qualitative methods with interpersonal communication topics, highlighting numerous specific examples of interpersonal qualitative research projects throughout. Further, the six exemplar studies (ranging from family relationships to friends-with-benefits) illuminate interpersonal qualitative application. These heuristic examples demonstrate potential qualitative applications for interpersonal research. Because of page limitations, the abbreviated studies only provide a glimpse of larger projects. A deeper methodology section for these short studies would have been helpful to tease out methodological choices and provide examples of how to report qualitative research for publication. However, the interpersonal exemplars paired with transcripts of researchers discussing their work is part of the unique contribution this book offers compared to other qualitative methodology books.

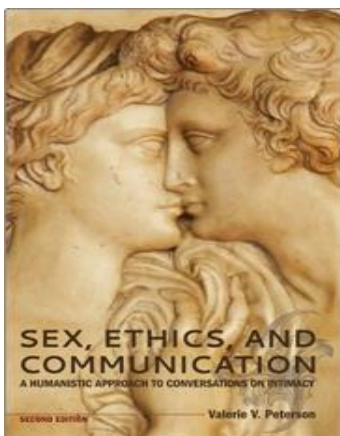
**Manning** and **Kunkel** (2014) contend that “the methodologies supporting all qualitative work, from realist orientations used with post-positivist studies to the more artistic forms of scholarship such as autoethnography and performance, can inform the entire body of interpersonal communication scholarship” (p. 9). This book provides a solid starting point to enhance understanding and provide support for qualitative interpersonal research.

*Sarah E. Riforgiate received her B.S. from University of Illinois and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Arizona State University in Communication Studies. She is currently at Kansas State University, where her academic endeavors concentrate on organizational and interpersonal communication to improve the understanding of the intersections of paid work and private life, while exploring practical solutions to reduce conflict. Her research includes projects focusing on work/life boundaries, organizational policy communication, and positive organizational communication, among others.*

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## Book Review: Peterson (2013)

### *Sex, Ethics, and Communication: A Humanistic Approach to Conversations on Intimacy*



**Valerie V. Peterson's** *Sex, ethics, and communication: A humanistic approach to conversations on intimacy* (2013) is a liberal humanist's perspective on the myriad issues surrounding sexual intimacy. Because **Peterson** takes the perspective that sex is a social act (p. 7), her discussion focuses on the responsibilities partners have to each other and to themselves to make sex “an ethical practice – a practice that is related to, but not reducible to, communication” (p. 8). Indeed, one of the major strengths of this book is that it moves discussions of sexual responsibility beyond admonitions to use condoms to avoid pregnancy or to avoid contracting STIs. **Peterson** argues that sexual responsibility must be more broadly construed as avoiding a failure to care for oneself or one's partners – that is, about failing to do “what is right by and for the other person” (p. 15). Examples of failures to care include, **Peterson**

argues, abusive and/or coercive sex, lying to one's partner, and hypocrisy. (*Book Review continued on p. 5.*)

As a result, *Sex, ethics, and communication* is a much-needed complement to existing literature about the dark side of interpersonal relating, aversive interpersonal behaviors, and interpersonal attraction because it sensitizes readers to how their own and their partners' communication can prevent such negative personal relational events before they occur. Drawing on Eugene Borowitz's (1969) work on this topic, [Peterson](#) presents readers six issues to consider so they can avoid failing to care for themselves or others: pleasure, consent, marital status, procreative intent, and liking and/or loving one's partner. These ethics are helpfully summarized in [Peterson's](#) Sex Ethics Diagram (p. 36), a Venn-like diagram that forces readers to thoughtfully consider where their sexual practices are located. The book is organized into three sections: ethics, communication, and society. Although [Peterson](#) discusses the six ethics most directly in the first section, the other two sections usefully emphasize other, related issues that may inform one's ethics (e.g., metaphors for relationships and sex that circulate in American popular culture, the sex-based pay gap).

Another strength of *Sex, ethics, and communication* is [Peterson's](#) exploration of interpersonal and public communication about sex. One highlight of this section is that [Peterson](#) reminds readers about the importance of mindfully communicating with partners about sex. [Peterson](#) argues that such communication takes effort, patience, shared vocabularies, and that "the way communication about sexual intimacy occurs is just as important as the information about sexual intimacy that is conveyed" (p. 65). In Appendix A, [Peterson](#) provides some suggestions for how people can rephrase topics of concern in order to truthfully communicate about sex in a way that honors their and their partner's face. For example, [Peterson](#) suggests replacing "I don't like what you're doing" when a partner fails to attend to one's pleasure ethic with "Can you try this?" or "Can we change positions?" Some readers may find they want to talk about important matters [Peterson](#) highlights other than sexual techniques (e.g., sexual consent, contraception, equal pay, same-sex marriage). As a consequence, those readers may find the range of topics in Appendix A to be too narrow for their needs. Appendix A, which focuses only on wording suggestions for readjusting a partner's sexual techniques, is not able to help such readers begin to have those consequential and difficult conversations. One thing students and teachers might consider doing, then, is to focus their discussions on ways in which they could initiate and mindfully engage in conversations about the important matters [Peterson](#) highlights but does not provide conversational suggestions for.

[Valerie V. Peterson's](#) *Sex, ethics, and communication* would be a useful text for undergraduate classes on interpersonal relationships, health communication, and gender studies if presented with discussion leaders who use [Peterson's](#) book as the beginning of an exploration into the communication and ethics of sex. As [Peterson](#) writes, "To be ethical about sex, people need to do more than simply obey rules. ... people may even need to question the sexual rules of their culture" (p. 14). With *Sex, ethics, and communication* in hand, readers will be able to begin doing just that.

*Amanda L. Irions is pursuing a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, where she studies the impacts of intercultural and intergroup factors on interpersonal communication about sex, consent, and relationships.*

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## Interested in Reviewing for CSCA?

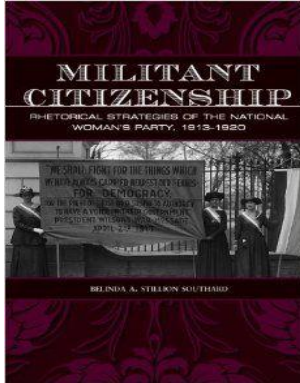
Contact the Book Review Editor!

Sarah Steimel

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# Book Review: Southard (2013)

## *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Women's Party, 1913-1920*



Belinda Stillion Southard's *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Women's Party, 1913-1920* (2011) chronicles the quest for women's suffrage in the United States. The first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were marked by social reform movements that sought to empower those disenfranchised and oppressed by the effects of industrialization and government corruption. After setting this backdrop of early 20<sup>th</sup> century American politics, Stillion Southard locates the victory of the National Women's Party [NWP] within the Progressive Era paradox that at once advocated for increased democratic participation and an "ideal" citizen who was still a white man. Further, in *Militant Citizenship*, Stillion Southard argues that the NWP members carefully deployed specific strategies of mimesis during Wilson presidency in order to attain the vote. By copying, parodying, quoting, and re-appropriating tactics of the presidential administration, Stillion Southard finds that the NWP was able to access strategies and avenues of political power traditionally used to obstruct women's access to full enfranchisement. *Militant Citizenship* then will serve as an illuminating and useful text for communication scholars and teachers, particularly those in public address, critical and cultural, feminist, and/or activism divisions.

After an introductory chapter, which sets up the context surrounding the NWP's final push for voting rights and surveys the relevant literature on Progressivism, social movement rhetoric, and mimeses, chapter 2 takes the reader back to colonial America, where the "daughters of the Revolution" struggled to be included in the formation of their new nation. Stillion Southard connects Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's work at the conference at Seneca Falls as the inspiration of NWP founders Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. Chapter 3 chronicles the 1913 suffrage parade, launched specifically to mimic Wilson's presidential inaugural parade. The NWP formed a third political party, the Women's Party, and mimicked traditional campaign strategies, such as establishing headquarters and launching their platform in the same time and place as the Republican and Democratic conventions. Chapter 4 details the years 1917 and 1918, when the author identifies a discernible shift in the NWP's mimesis from parody to militancy. Activists dubbed "Silent Sentinels" began quietly protesting in front of the White House, holding banners directly quoting the President. Here, Stillion Southard points out how such mimesis turned Wilson's rhetorical presidency right back at him. Finally, chapter 5 finds that the NWP's appeal to the U.S.' 1918 campaign for world democracy eventually cornered President Wilson into supporting national suffrage for American women. Ultimately, the members of the NWP were able to gain the vote in 1919 by directly linking women's suffrage to U.S. identity by exploiting the paradox that the Progressive Wilson presidency attempted to maintain.

*Militant Citizenship* branches from Stillion Southard's dissertation and is nicely pared down to just fewer than 200 pages. Her study carefully rhetorically criticizes the bold methods used by the NWP to gain full American citizenship. With 70 pages of notes and hundreds of references, the author has conducted a thorough investigation into the radical protest strategies of her subjects and is able to provide an admirable amount of evidence. The text is organized chronologically, with examples of mimesis and militancy deftly weaved throughout, the sum of which effectively back her thesis. (Book Review continued on p. 7.)

There is at least one instance of an underutilized theoretical perspective, when early on [Stillion Southard](#) presents literature on Bakhtin's carnival. This material is dropped as quickly as it is introduced and doesn't seem to add a substantial insight into the NWP's activities. Otherwise, [Stillion Southard](#) does a nice job of illustrating the momentum gained by the women's suffrage movement, from mimicking political party formation and parades, to militant tactics such as obstructing traffic and deliberate arrests. There is a real sense of danger by the middle *Militant Citizenship*, leading up, of course, to the famous hunger strikes and forced feedings that several NWP members endured in jail. [Stillion Southard](#) further drives home that these women (and some men) were fighting a "war" by using militant language throughout: "battle," "comrades," "rebellion," and "forged alliances," for example. As the years dragged on for the suffragists, the author skillfully demonstrates their increasing frustration and intensification. The writing is clear and clean, and the combination of theoretical concepts and the personal narratives of these extraordinary activists constructs a readable academic book. For these reasons, I recommend *Militant Citizenship* to a broad audience of communication scholars as well as those outside the discipline with an interest in political and feminist activism, rhetorical strategies, or historical narrative.

*Amanda LeBlanc is a Ph.D. student in the Communication Department at The University of South Florida. She holds an M.A. in Women's Studies (University of South Florida) and an M.A. in Communication (University of Colorado Boulder). Her academic interests include rhetorical criticism, popular culture, feminist theory, and media studies*

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